

20. (Newly Added) The housing according to claim 8, wherein the areas of reduced rigidity are located in the peripheral wall of the frame.

21. (Newly Added) The housing according to claim 20, wherein the areas of reduced rigidity are located at the distal end of the peripheral wall of the frame.

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 were rejected. Claims 1, 8, and 12-14 have been amended. Claims 2 and 9 have been canceled and their features have been incorporated into claims 1 and 8, respectively. Claims 16-21 have been added to further define the present invention. No new matter has been added.

Claims 8-11 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. More particularly, the Office Action states that "[c]laim 8 recites the limitation 'the frame' in line 3. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim". It is respectfully submitted that claim 8, line 2 recites "a frame". Accordingly, there is sufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 8-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Taylor et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,876,219). As described above, claims 2 and 9 have been canceled, which obviates the rejection of these claims. It is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 3-8, and 10-15 are allowable over the art of record for the reasons set forth below.

Claims 1 and 8 (as amended) include features that are neither disclosed nor suggested by the Taylor et al. reference, namely, as represented by claim 1:

... areas of reduced rigidity in the housing located at positions generally furthest from a neutral point of the connector. (emphasis added)

The present invention as claimed in claims 1 and 8 is directed to an electrical connector housing that has areas of reduced rigidity located at positions generally furthest from a neutral point of the connector. The areas of reduced rigidity (e.g., the areas of housing 15 near openings 12 in Figure 3) avoid stress buildup by accommodating the deformation or warpage caused by thermal cycling. The areas of reduced rigidity are provided in the housing where the greatest deformation in the connector is expected (i.e., at the positions generally furthest from a neutral point of the connector) (specification, as originally filed, page 6, lines 15-20, and Figure 3 and its corresponding description at page 6, lines 21-31). Thus, the reliability of the connector and its housing is improved.

On the other hand, Taylor et al. discloses peripheral walls 15 with portions of reduced thickness 17. The walls 15 with portions of reduced thickness 17 provide alignment in combination with surfaces 18, 19 during mating of the connectors. The areas of reduced thickness 17 do not avoid stress buildup and are not provided in the housing at the positions generally furthest from a neutral point of the connector, as required by claims 1 and 8.

Claim 12 (as amended) includes features that are neither disclosed nor suggested by the Taylor et al. reference, namely:

A method of reducing rigidity in a housing of an electrical connector, comprising:
determining a location on said housing which may build up stress; and
removing a portion of the housing at said location. (emphasis added)

The present invention as claimed in claim 12 is directed to a method of reducing the rigidity in an electrical connector housing by determining a location on the housing where stress may build up, and then removing a portion of the housing at that location. The portion of the housing that is removed corresponds to the areas of reduced rigidity described above. These areas of reduced

rigidity avoid stress buildup by accommodating the deformation or warpage caused by thermal cycling, thereby increasing the reliability of the connector and its housing.

As described above, Taylor et al. merely discloses peripheral walls 15 with portions of reduced thickness 17 that are used for alignment. The walls 15 with portions of reduced thickness 17 provide alignment in combination with surfaces 18, 19 during mating of the connectors. Taylor et al. does not determine a location on the housing which may build up stress, and remove a portion of the housing at the location, as required by claim 12.

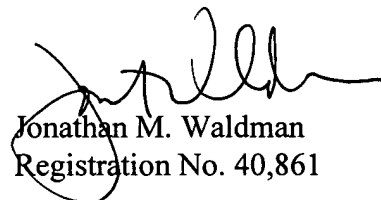
Based on the foregoing, claims 1, 8, and 12 should not be rejected as being anticipated by Taylor et al. Thus, claims 1, 8, and 12 are patentable for the reasons set forth above. Claims 3-7 are dependent on claim 1, claims 10 and 11 are dependent on claim 8, and claims 13-15 are dependent on claim 12, and are patentable over the art of record for the reasons set forth above. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) is respectfully requested.

Applicants have added claims 16-21 in order to further define the present invention. Basis for claims 16-21 is found in the application, as originally filed, in Figures 3-5. No new matter has been added.

It is respectfully submitted that claims 16-21 are patentable over the art of record.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance. Early notification to this effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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